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Stratospheric Air-Ships a Platform for Earth Observation

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Remote sensing technologies are essential for Earth monitoring. Satellites offers monitoring on a global scale, however satellite missions are costly, difficult to reconfigure and cannot monitor the same area continuously. Stratospheric airships may remain aloft at zero energy expenditure thus allowing continuously monitoring of areas of interest for extended periods of time. Furthermore they may be brought down for reconfiguration. With autonomous navigation and control the airships may conduct missions in remote areas. Thus stratospheric airship offers a desirable compromise between a space based solution and a land or sea based local observer. At DTU Space we are working towards the realization of an autonomous stratospheric airship. Here we present the airship as well as current and future activities in the development.